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LICENSING PRINCIPALS: IOWA'S PREPARATION REFORM INITIATIVE

Donald G. Hackmann
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Carolyn L. Wanat
University of Iowa

Nearly 20 years old (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988; Hart & Pounder, 1999; Murphy, 2006, 2007), the debate over principal preparation and licensure reform has become the most contested issue in the field of educational administration (McCarthy, 2004). Recognized as a concern by the academic community (Young & Kochan, 2004; Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002), shortcomings of licensure programs have been the object of severe criticism (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005). Looking for ways to increase accountability, state departments of education have called for extensive reform of principal licensure (Herrington & Wills, 2005). The majority of states have moved to a standards-based approach to guide both pre-service administrator training and professional development of current administrators (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1996). Under the scrutiny of critics and the movement to standards-based preparation, universities subsequently have been challenged to dramatically reconfigure licensure programs (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

The state of Iowa is illustrative of the reform movement that is occurring nationally. After adopting a slightly modified version of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards in 1999, the Iowa Department of Education required all existing or potential providers of principal licensure to develop new programs for approval by the Iowa Board of Education. A national panel was commissioned to write guidelines and review and recommend programs for approval. Following a rigorous multi-year review

process, five programs received approval to license principals in Iowa. In this paper, we describe Iowa's review process and analyze the content of approved programs. Our content analysis compares and contrasts required features in approved programs. Iowa's initiative at principal licensure reform provides a context for states contemplating systemic licensure reform.

Reform Literature

As background, we provide an overview of the history of licensure reform. Then, we review literature on required components in Iowa's new programs—definition of leadership, curriculum and delivery, faculty characteristics, and student recruitment and selection.

Overview of the Reform Movement

National conversations about limitations of leadership preparation, which began in the late 1980s, have prompted responses by numerous organizations. In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA) identified a "lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experience in preparation programs" (Jackson & Kelly, 2002, p. 193). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) developed a knowledge and skill base for principals in 1993 (Thomson, 1993), and in 1996, the ISLLC standards were published to provide "a clear, organized set of curriculum content and performance standards" (Jackson & Kelley, 2002, p. 194). In 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) aligned their accreditation standards for leadership preparation with the ISLLC standards, adding a seventh standard related to clinical experiences (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Yet, critics continue to describe existing university programs as totally inadequate (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005). Although the academic community pointed out faults in Levine's (2005) research that fails to recognize programs that have made significant change (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, n.d.), professors generally concede that some programs are inadequate and can benefit from reform (Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002). Advocates and most critics of university

preparation programs do agree on the general shortcomings of university programs. For example, Hale and Moorman (2003) identify problems with traditional university programs that professors recognize as being addressed in innovative programs (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr, 2006). Exemplary programs are recognized for their visions of leadership, which we address in the next section.

Definition of Leadership

Programs have been criticized for not defining good educational leadership that focuses on the influence of leadership on teaching and learning (Orr, 2006). Scholars and policy makers agree that preparation programs must provide principals with skills to effect substantive school reforms that will result in high levels of learning for every child (Glickman, 2002; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Orr, 2006). Adams and Copland (2005) assert that no states have successfully developed principal licensure policies for school leadership that are focused on student learning. However, we will show that guidelines for program revision in Iowa support the principal as instructional leader as the conceptual framework for program redesign.

In addition, principals are faced with other challenging roles, made complex by the evolving nature of tasks connected to the position (Daresh, Gantner, Dunlap, & Hvizdak, 2000; Grogan & Andrews, 2002). Murphy (2002) describes the challenge of reculturing the principalship to include the roles of moral steward, educator, and community builder. Universal calls are being made to expand the principal's role to include advocacy for social justice, thereby ensuring equitable and just learning outcomes for all students (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Marshall & Ward, 2004; McKenzie, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2006).

Program Content and Delivery

Redefining leadership has led to continued debate about program content and delivery to prepare school leaders. In 1993 the NPBEA identified 21 domains for professional development of principals which supported the view that the knowledge and skill base

should "provide a platform for practice" (Thomson, 1993, p. ix). The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) defined the knowledge base in a series of documents entitled *Primis* (Jackson & Kelley, 2002), and the ISLLC standards (CCSSO, 1996) or their adaptation provide the organizing framework for curriculum development in 46 states (Sanders & Simpson, 2006).

Program content. Programs are challenged to design curricula with an integrated relevant knowledge base developed around a common vision of leadership created by collaborating with stakeholders (Hale & Moorman, 2003; McCarthy, 1999; Murphy, 1993; Orr, 2006; Young et al., 2002). Rather than the traditional university course structure approach, some argue that problems of practice should provide the organizing framework through the use of a learner-centered approach (Bridges, 1992; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Jackson & Kelley, 2002, Murphy, 2007).

Clinical experiences. Many leadership preparation programs have responded to demands for more practical experiences by increasing students' clinical experience requirements. Many scholars (Grogan & Andrews, 2002), policymakers (Hale & Moorman, 2003), and state guidelines for program revision (Iowa Department of Education, 2002) advocate for year-long internships. However, the vast majority of programs are designed to permit students to maintain full-time employment as educators while they complete their coursework as part-time students. Consequently, clinical experiences also must be developed around educators' professional responsibilities. Despite this limitation, many programs have dramatically increased requirements for time in the field, averaging more than 600 clinical hours per academic year (Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

The quality of clinical experiences can be enriched by involving exemplary administrators as mentors (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Carefully selected and trained mentors socialize aspiring and novice principals in the profession (Matthews & Crow, 2003), increasing their capacity to meet the demands of school leadership (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). Mentors' involvement in clinical experiences also provides a connection

between preparation and practice (Cambron-McCabe, 1999) and a collaborative relationship for program faculty and field practitioners (Hart & Pounder, 1999).

Cohort model. Program delivery is widely available through the cohort model. Virtually all reformed programs are offered through cohorts (Orr, 2006; Young et al., 2002). Cohorts provide an efficient delivery structure and create a collegial culture and professional networks for aspiring leaders. Cohorts have advantages of increased academic rigor, scaffolding learning experiences, and improved program completion rates (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000).

Characteristics of Educational Leadership Faculty

Having a diverse faculty is a desirable, yet challenging goal as preparation programs strive for a balance of professors with different gender, race, and experience backgrounds. In the 1960s and 1970s, faculty predominately were white, male, and former administrators (McCarthy, 1988). Faculty composition has shown slightly encouraging trends over the past 20 years as programs have included more women and, to a lesser degree, minorities. McCarthy (1988) reported that faculty distribution in 1988 included 8% minority and 12% women. Significant faculty turnover from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s led to faculties including 29% women and 13% persons of color (McCarthy & Kuh, 1997). The 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:04) reported that, by fall 2003, 37% of full-time faculty in educational leadership were women. There was no growth in representation of people of color, however, as 87% of respondents identified themselves as White non-Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], n.d.).

Leadership preparation programs ideally should include faculty members with administrative experience, so that they can ensure credibility with students, local districts, and state administrator associations. In the most recent national survey of educational leadership professors (Murphy, 2007), McCarthy and Kuh (1997) reported that one-third of professors were former school leaders. Pounder, Crow, and Bergerson (2004) noted similar

findings as approximately 35% of new professors responding to their survey possessed K-12 administrative experience.

Another faculty characteristic worthy of comment is the extent of university experience. McCarthy (1988, 1999) had projected that at least half of the educational leadership professoriate would retire by the start of the 21st century, and that prediction appears to have become a reality. In the NSOPF:04 survey, 46.4% of respondents reported they were employed for five or fewer years, and just under 70% had 10 or fewer years of service at their current institutions (NCES, n.d.). Programs with relatively inexperienced faculty appear to be a national phenomenon.

The over-reliance on adjunct faculty members to teach educational administration coursework is of growing concern to the profession (Shakeshaft, 2002). Trend data indicate that programs increasingly are utilizing part-time instructors to teach courses; NSOPF:04 reported that 64% of educational administration faculty were part-time in fall 2003 (NCES, n.d.). Schneider, who terms these individuals *invisible faculty*, notes that that adjunct and tenure-track faculty rarely interact regarding issues of program quality (Schneider, 2003). According to Levine (2005), program graduates have asserted that many adjunct instructors fail to integrate practice with theory and research, had narrow perspectives, were unprepared in the courses they were teaching, and were ineffective instructors.

Student Recruitment and Selection

Preparation programs have been criticized for inadequate candidate recruitment and admissions processes with low admissions criteria that rely on candidate self-selection. Admissions criteria typically do not have clear linkages to leadership (Murphy, 2006) with common criteria including grade point averages (GPA), Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, letters of recommendation, writing samples, and personal interviews (Murphy, 1999). Admissions criteria of GPAs, GRE scores, and recommendation letters were confirmed in Creighton and Jones's (2001) study of admissions practices of 450 leadership

preparation programs. Levine (2005) expressed concerns over students who were primarily interested in simply advancing on their salary schedules rather than the pursuit of rigorous study. Next, we discuss the role states play in reform, focusing on Iowa's mandates for program change.

State Initiatives

Because they have the authority to establish policies related to leadership preparation programming, states have considerable power in licensure reform (Hess & Kelly, 2005; Herrington & Wills, 2005). State legislators and education department officials, therefore, could initiate the overhaul of administrative licensure regulations. However, outspoken critics Hess and Kelly (2005) argue that states perpetuate problems of licensure, calling them privileged gatekeepers of the status quo with little incentive to change current licensure systems. While acknowledging that some states have demanded minimal change, they recognize the Iowa Department of Education's requirement that preparation programs "provide more practical field experience" (p. 163). We will show that the Iowa reform process was comprehensive, including field experience as one area for reform.

Policymakers can urge states to make positive changes in licensure reform. Support of the ISSLC standards by the National Association of State Boards of Education is one example of policymakers' recognition of state influence. In NASBE's journal, Murphy (2005) advises states how they may use the standards to ". . . bring the vision of student-centered leadership embedded in the *Standards* to life" (pp. 15-16). In another initiative, the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP, 2003) advised state policymakers to redefine effective educational leadership, particularly preparation, selection, and development of administrators. Iowa, one of 22 SAELP states, has responded. The Iowa Department of Education and the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), the state's professional organization for school leaders, have collaboratively created and delivered professional development programs funded by Iowa's SAELP grant. SAI has stated its

"ultimate aim. . . to have SAI/practicing administrator input into the content. . ., assessment/outcomes, and faculty choices (professors and practicing administrators team teaching) by the colleges and universities conducting administrator preparation programs" (School Administrators of Iowa, 1997, October 27). SAI's stated goal, coupled with its role in administering Iowa's SAELP grant, shows state influence over principal preparation. Next we briefly describe events that led to principal licensure reform in Iowa.

Iowa's Review Process

The state of Iowa has replaced long-standing, highly prescriptive curriculum content mandates with school leadership standards to guide principal preparation. Principal licensure reform began in fall 1999, when the Iowa Department of Education convened a Leadership Steering Committee to lay the foundation for reform. This group's work laid the foundation for the adoption of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL), an adaptation of the ISLLC standards. Subsequently, changes to Iowa legislative code for administrator preparation, effective August 31, 2001, specified new requirements for principal preparation programs, which were based on the ISSL standards, rather than specific content that previously have been mandated in the state legislative code. The real work of licensure reform—which was driven by standards—was about to begin.

Educational entities intending to license principals, including in-state higher education institutions with existing leadership preparation programs that were approved under the previous legislation, were required to submit proposed programs that met the new Iowa requirements. The Iowa Department of Education consultant responsible for educational leadership program reviews chaired a statewide task force to write guidelines for development and approval of principal licensure programs; this group met twice in fall 2001 to work on the guidelines. One of the authors of this article was the lone higher education representative appointed to this task force. In January 2002, the consultant sent an email notification to the Iowa Council of Professors of Educational Administration, the

state organization for professors, explaining that she did not have sufficient time to draft guidelines. Therefore, the Department of Education elected to contract with a national consultant to prepare guidelines and review programs as he had done in other states.

He commissioned a national panel of three additional reviewers, who were experienced educational leadership professors with whom he had worked previously. These four individuals also had conducted leadership preparation program reviews in two states, using a similar process as the one proposed for the state of Iowa. The panel was to interpret state mandates and establish criteria for program approval. In February 2002 the panel presented program review instructions (IDE, 2002) and a timeline of 15 months to develop new programs. Instructions specified that the review criteria were to include a conceptual framework for the principalship program, curriculum and instructional delivery, faculty characteristics, and student recruitment and admission processes.

Nine applications were submitted in May 2003: seven proposals from higher education institutions currently offering approved programs, one new proposal from a higher education institution, and one new proposal from a state professional organization. One higher education institution currently offering an approved program did not submit an application, thereby terminating its program. The national panel reviewed programs through multiple program drafts and meetings with program faculty. By August 2003, they had recommended five programs to the Iowa Department of Education for approval: four from universities and one from an in-state professional organization. The four unsuccessful applicants were provided an opportunity to withdraw their submissions rather than to have their programs officially denied; all four elected to withdraw their applications.

As professors at two universities in Iowa, we were immersed in principal licensure reform. We were coordinators of approved, long-standing principal licensure programs. Both of us served on various state committees that addressed the reforms. Each of us spent many hours working with our respective program faculties to revise programs. We believed that an empirical study of the review process and content of approved programs would add

to our understanding of licensure reform, as well as providing some guidance for faculty members in other states who may be experiencing similar reforms. Next, we describe the methods we used to conduct our investigation.

Method

We examined all relevant documents in Iowa's principal licensure reform: Iowa code defining new requirements for principal preparation, application instructions written by the review panel, and five program submissions that were approved in 2003-2004. We also consulted websites to identify differences in existing and proposed programs. We had hoped to review the materials of the unsuccessful applicants to compare features of successful and unsuccessful applicants. However, because unsuccessful applicants formally withdrew their materials, we were unable to obtain their documents.

We conducted a content analysis (Krippendorf, 1980) to compare program guidelines with successful programs and to look for consistencies and inconsistencies between approved applications. Content analysis allowed us to focus on written documents (Neuendorf, 2002) to systematically and objectively identify specified characteristics within texts (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966). We established rules for data selection (Berg, 2004). Specifically, we used panel criteria for program review to record similarities and differences in content and quality across program submissions and related documents. We compared each program's proposed conceptual framework against the curriculum to note degrees of alignment. We coded documents line by line to discover key concepts within each conceptual framework and descriptions of curriculum content within each course. We also examined syllabi to note points of curriculum similarity and difference. Data were recorded in tables to identify recurring patterns and themes in program materials (Patton, 2002). We analyzed the data independently. Then, we exchanged data tables and tentative conclusions and collaborated in developing the findings, discussion points, and conclusions.

Findings

Findings are organized according to the program review criteria: conceptual framework, curriculum and delivery, faculty, and student recruitment and admission. Each section describes expectations for program submissions, as stated in application guidelines, and notes similarities and differences among the five approved programs. To protect programs' identities to the degree possible, the four universities are labeled Programs A, B, C, and D, and the alternative program is Program E. The four universities had existing programs, and an Iowa practitioner organization presented a new program. We make this distinction between the university and alternative programs here because the differences will be obvious in our analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Application instructions stated that each submission should present a well-crafted conceptual framework that included a vision and mission for the program, a theory of quality schooling that would result in high levels of performance for all students, and a standards-based theory and approach to school leadership. The following paragraphs analyze these elements.

Vision and mission statements. Instructions stated that the vision should establish the program's direction and its curriculum and align with Iowa's vision of school and leadership excellence. Three programs included a vision statement, one developed a combined vision/mission statement, and one did not provide a vision for the program. Of the four submissions that referenced a vision, each focused on Iowa's commitment to school excellence. Included were phrases such as "creating healthy schools," "all children learning at high levels," "education in a democratic and just society," "high levels of student performance," and "leaders for sustainable school improvement."

Every program included a mission statement, and all referenced the term "leader" or "leadership" in their mission. As noted in Table 1, three programs emphasized the

importance of reflective leaders (A, C, and D), another stressed personal and professional development (B), and the fifth (E) addressed "leaders of learning communities."

Table 1: Mission Statements of Preparation Programs

Program	Mission Statement
Program A	The mission is to develop and nurture reflective leaders of learning and service who make a difference in creating healthy schools and communities.
Program B	The mission is to endorse aspiring PK-12 principals through professional and personal leadership development in order to serve schools where all students achieve at high levels.
Program C	We believe in the value, importance and sanctity of education in a democratic and just society. Inherent in this belief is the need for reflective professional leadership informed by educational theory, best practice, and continuing research.
Program D	The mission is to prepare reflective leaders who promote high quality schools that result in high levels of learning for every child.
Program E	The mission is to prepare educators to become leaders of learning communities.

Conceptual framework themes. Application instructions explicitly stated that the conceptual framework must outline a coherent, well-integrated basis for program design, development, and implementation. There was tremendous variability in the depth of information contained in the five submissions. One framework was highly skeletal, with minimal descriptions and few citations from the literature on the principalship and leadership preparation. Two programs presented highly developed theories of leadership based on a comprehensive review of literature related to the changing role of the principal and quality leadership preparation programming. Falling midway between these two extremes, the remaining two submissions outlined theoretical frameworks that included a moderate number of citations to the literature.

Although not every conceptual framework was extensively developed, an overarching theme provided a theoretical foundation for each program (Table 2). Three programs (B, C, and D) focused on reflective practice, as well as three core areas of responsibility that were closely related: instructional leadership, social justice advocate, and agent of school reform. Program A highlighted leadership for learning, and Program E emphasized distributive leadership as their conceptual frameworks.

Table 2: Components of Principal Preparation Programs

	Program A	**Program B**	**Program C**	**Program D**	**Program E**
Type of Institution	University	University	University	University	Professional Association
Themes within Conceptual Framework	*Leader for learning* • Building learning communities	*Reflective leader* • Leader of learning • Leader of service: Moral agent and social advocate • Leader of change	*Reflective professional* • Instructional leader • Social justice advocate • Agent of school reform agent	*Facilitator of reflective practice* • Collaborative instructional leader • Transformational leader • Social justice	*Distributive leader* • Leader of learning community • Leading standards-based reform
Course Structure	Three-semester-hour courses	1-, 2-, 3-semester- hour courses	Three-semester-hour courses	Three-semester-hour courses	Modules
Delivery Model	Cohort, part-time	Cohort, part-time	Cohort-like, part-time	Cohort, part-time	Cohort, part-time
Total Hours	36 hours	39-40 hours	35 hours	36 hours	18 modules

Although each used different terms, all five programs consistently portrayed four roles for the principalship: instructional leader, collaborative leader, reflective practitioner, and change agent. The concept of "leadership for learning" was highlighted in all programs; Programs B, C, D, and E identified instructional leadership as the building leader's most important responsibility, and Program A described the leader's commitment to the success of all learners as a core responsibility. Each argued that collaboration was essential to create a professional learning community, framing this responsibility in terms of building relationships with internal and external constituents. Applications described the principal's role in sharing leadership with school faculty and staff, using the terms distributed (or distributive), broad-based, or collaborative instructional leadership, or shared decision-making. Applications described external collaboration as "working with the community," "facilitating connections with families," "connecting with others," and "developing relationships with stakeholders."

Reflective practice was an essential element in all programs, as stated in mission statements, theoretical frameworks, and/or through reflective assignments in course syllabi. The leader's role as a change agent was present in all five submissions, depicted as transformational leader, agent of school reform, catalyst for change, and leader of standards-based reform.

The state of Iowa previously had not mandated that programs develop a vision, mission, and conceptual framework for leadership preparation programs. A review of program websites disclosed that these elements were not present in existing programs, so it seemed clear that developing a framework that served as the foundation for their principal preparation programs was a new activity for some of the faculties.

Curriculum and Delivery

Application instructions required programs to develop curricula aligned to ISSL standards and the proposed conceptual framework. Iowa code mandated that ISSL-aligned

curriculum require program graduates to demonstrate knowledge of the following areas: administration, supervision, and evaluation; curriculum development and management; adult learning theory; human growth and development for children; family support systems; school law and legislative and public policy issues affecting children and families; and evaluator training and data-based leadership. Rather than mandating specific courses, Iowa code and application guidelines permitted faculty to devise and justify their own curricular approaches, based upon their proposed conceptual frameworks. For the first time, Iowa code also required all administrator preparation candidates to participate in clinical practice experiences. This section includes information on the course structure and total hours required by programs, course delivery models, content, and instructional methods.

Course structure and required hours. University programs provided traditional semester-hour courses. Three (A, C, D) primarily proposed three-semester-hour course structures, and the fourth (B) offered courses ranging from one to three semester hours. Because Program E did not award college credit, developers were not subject to university constraints regarding instructional contact time for courses. Therefore, Program E's curriculum consisted of 18 modules, each including approximately 13 hours of instructional contact time and 20 hours of field experiences.

Compared to required hours in existing programs, universities proposed similar requirements and several increased the total number of hours required for the degree. Total semester hours in previous programs had ranged from 30 to 40 hours; the range in newly approved programs was 35-40 hours. This increase resulted from the clinical experience requirement. Two existing programs had not required a clinical component. Total hours required for the degree in one institution (A) increased from 30 to 36 hours; the second institution (C) increased from 32 to 35 hours. The other two universities, which required field-based experiences in existing programs, maintained 36 and 39-40 hours. As stated above, Program E required 18 modules, each including clinical requirements, for program completion.

Course delivery model. All applicants proposed delivery models that supported students' learning experiences and were designed for part-time students who maintained full-time employment. Programs A, B, D, and E proposed a cohort delivery model, in which a student group would be formally admitted into the program and enroll in courses in a predetermined, structured sequence. Program C proposed a "cohort-like" structure that would embrace the benefits of the cohort model, but that permitted individual students greater flexibility to take courses. Using the cohort and "cohort-like" model was a new development for two programs. Programs were designed that so that all requirements could be completed within two to three years, and the universities provided an option for full-time study with program completion in a shorter time frame.

Course content and clinical experiences. Application instructions stated that curriculum should be aligned with program mission and conceptual framework. Each submission included a rationale for the proposed curriculum, a matrix that mapped curriculum content within the framework of the ISSL standards, and syllabi for all proposed courses. These materials were analyzed to identify curricular themes within the course structures. Analysis disclosed that Programs A and D significantly revised curricula and restructured course content, with new courses developed and existing courses retitled to reflect curricular changes. Program C engaged in a moderate amount of curriculum revision within existing courses and created one new course. Program B proposed minor revisions to its existing program and no changes in course titles. As an entirely new provider, the alternative provider proposed a new format.

Programs varied in how they distributed core curricula throughout courses. Although course titles varied among programs, analyzing syllabi revealed the primary topical area for each course. In general, the core curriculum was consistent throughout programs, yet the relative importance of content varied. All five programs developed courses with primary emphasis in the following topics: curriculum, instructional supervision, special education and diversity, school and community relationships, management issues, and research (Table 3).

Clinical experiences were assigned as formal courses in the universities and were integrated as a primary emphasis across all modules of the alternative program. Four programs also offered the following courses: school law (A integrated legal issues throughout several courses), organizational behavior, and school reform (C included this content in several courses). When compared with their existing programs, the universities placed increased emphasis on instructional leadership, school reform, and clinical experiences that were designed to enhance theory-to-practice connections.

Table 3: Primary Topic Area Addressed in Principal Preparation Program Courses

	Program				
Primary Topic Area	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Curriculum	X	X	X	X	X
Instructional Supervision	X	X	X	X	X
Special Education and Diversity	X	X	X	X	X
School and Community	X	X	X	X	X
Management Issues	X	X	X	X	X
Research	X	X	X	X	X
Law		X	X	X	X
Organizational Behavior	X	X	X	X	
School Reform	X	X		X	X
Personal Analysis	X				X
Educational Psychology		X			
Elective			X		
Clinical Experiences	X	X	X	X	X

All programs embedded clinical activities in each course, so that students could connect classroom theory to actual practice. Although the state had not mandated minimum requirements for the clinical component, the four universities required at least 400 clock hours of clinical activities in coursework and substantive field experiences in one or more school settings. Through clinical experiences embedded in the 18 modules, the alternative program required approximately 360 clock hours of clinical experiences.

Differences in emphasis also were noted among the five programs (Table 4). Stressing the aspiring leader's ability to reflect on skills development and professional growth, Program A began with a Personal and Professional Assessment Seminar and concluded with a Culmination Seminar. Program B required two educational psychology courses and emphasized technology uses. Program C was the only submission that permitted students to select one elective from a list of approved courses. Program D emphasized instructional leadership responsibilities, including supervision, evaluation, hiring practices, and professional development. See Table 4:

Table 4: Course Titles of Principal Preparation Programs, by Primary Topic Area

Primary Topic	Program	Course Title (Hours/Modules)
Curriculum	A	Instruction and Learning (3 hr)
	B	Curriculum and Instruction (3 hr)
		Technology (2 hr)
	C	Analysis and Appraisal of Curriculum (3 hr)
	D	Curriculum Leadership (3 hr)
	E	Standards-Based Curriculum (1 hr)
		Integrating Technology for Instruction (1 mod)
Instructional Supervision	A	Supervising Instruction (3 hr)
	B	Facilitating Professional Growth (3 hr)
	C	Supervision and Evaluation (3 hr)
	D	Supervision for Learning Environments (3 hr)
		Human Resource Development for Learning (3 hr)
	E	Evaluating Learning in the Wider Context (1 mod)
		Design of Professional Development (1 mod)
Special Education and Diversity	A	Diversity in Schools (3 hr)
	B	Special Education Law and Policy (3 hr)
	C	Administration of Students with Special Needs (3 hr)
	D	Diverse Learning Needs (3 hr)
	E	Special Education: Improving Learning (1 mod)
School and Community	A	Community and Society (3 hr)
	B	Organizational Management: Schools and Communities (3 hr)
	C	School and Community Relationships (3 hr)
	D	School Systems as Learning Cultures (3 hr)
	E	Collaborating and Assessing Needs of the Community (1 mod)
		Building and Strengthening Community Partnerships (1 mod)
		Communications and Communities (1 mod)
		Local, State, and National Educational Politics (1 mod)
		Economic Development Impacting Schools and Community (1 mod)
		Consensus and Communication (1 mod)
Management Issues	A	Managing Schools (3 hr)
	B	Leadership (3 hr)
	C	Contemporary Management Strategies for PK-12 Principals (3 hr)
	D	Current Issues in Site-Level Leadership (3 hr)
	E	Facilities and Technologies for Management (1 mod)
		Safe Schools (1 mod)
Research	A	Planning, Research, Measurement and Evaluation (3 hr)
	B	Educational Research (3 hr)
	C	Research for Effective School Leadership (3 hr)
	D	Educational Research (3 hr)
	E	Data Collection and Analysis (1 mod)
		Measuring and Evaluating Learners (1 mod)

Table 4: Course Titles of Principal Preparation Programs, by Primary Topic Area (continued)

Primary Topic	Program	Course Title (Hours/Modules)
Law	B	School Governance, Law, and Intersystems Relations (3 hr)
	C	Legal Aspects of School Personnel (3 hr)
	D	Education Law and Ethics (3 hr)
	E	Legal issues for K-12 Principals (1 mod)
Organizational Behavior	A	Leadership and the Profession (3 hr)
	B	Orientation to Educational Leadership (1 hr) Organizational Studies (3 hr)
	C	Foundations of School Administration (3 hr)
	D	Principles of Educational Leadership (3 hr)
School Reform	A	Organizational and System Behavior (3 hr)
	B	Change and Transformation (3 hr)
	D	Leading School Reform (3 hr)
	E	Systems Thinking (1 mod)
Personal Analysis	A	Personal and Professional Assessment Seminar (3 hr) Culmination Seminar (3 hr)
	E	Developing a Personal and Professional Code of Ethics (1 mod)
Educational Psychology	B	Foundations of Instructional Psychology (3 hr) Psychology of Adolescence (3 hr) or Child, Family, School (2 hr)
Elective	C	Approved elective course (3 hr)
Clinical Experiences	A	Clinical Experience (6 hrs); total 400 clock hours
	B	Clinical Experience (3 hrs); total 400 clock hours
	C	Clinical Experience (8 hrs); total 400 clock hours
	D	Clinical Experience (6 hrs); total 400 clock hours
	E	Clinical Experience (0 mod); 60% of total program

Despite their minor differences, core curricula of university programs had become more uniform, when proposed courses were compared to the existing programs. The structure of Program E (the professional organization) was most varied with curriculum content delivered through problem-based learning activities completed in clinical experiences. In each module, 60% of learning experiences were field-based with de-emphasis on theoretical aspects of leadership (i.e., no required organizational behavior instruction). Program E placed a much greater emphasis on school/community relationships; 1/3 of the modules were devoted to this topic.

Instructional methods. Proposed course delivery was uniform across programs. All applicants proposed the cohort model to scaffold learning and form collaborative or cooperative learning structures. Each was committed to student-centered or constructivist

learning environments and emphasized active learning methods (i.e., case studies, problem-based learning, action research projects, experiential learning, data analysis, authentic experiences).

Commonly, programs included multiple performance assessments interwoven throughout the course experiences and program activities that were newly mandated, reflection and metacognition, and more expansive use of technology. Programs A, B, D, and E intended to use distance learning channels, accessing Iowa's infrastructure to deliver courses through two-way interactive videoconferencing. Two (B and C) required students to develop electronic portfolios and to demonstrate proficiency with various technological tools. Through the submission of a matrix, programs were required to note how each ISSL standard would be addressed within the curriculum, as well as noting how students would demonstrate mastery of this standard. The inclusion of multiple performance assessments was a new requirement for programs, and the intent was for the programs to focus on student learning, as opposed to merely the delivery of content.

Faculty

Programs were required to provide evidence of a critical mass of qualified faculty. Allocated full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty lines at universities ranged from 4.0 to 7.25 FTE (Table 5). Of 18 total university faculty, 14 had held appointments as principals and/or superintendents, two had been high school department chairs, and two had been higher education administrators. All faculty members were Caucasian. All had earned doctoral degrees: 16 in educational administration, one in higher education administration, and one in educational psychology/philosophy. Three institutions (B, C, D) maintained both tenure-track and clinical positions, and one institution (A) included only tenure-track faculty. Two recently had converted tenure-track positions to clinical lines for supervision of clinical experiences. Three universities each had one vacant faculty position, and the remaining institution had two vacant positions. Assuming that the vacant positions were staffed for the

upcoming academic year, universities indicated that they had sufficient faculty resources to fully staff their programs without excessive reliance on adjunct instructors.

Table 5: Faculty at Principal Preparation Programs

Program	Full-Time Equivalency	Rank	Gender and Ethnicity
A	4.0 FTE	One full tenured professor One associate tenured professor One assistant untenured professor One vacant tenure-track position	One female Two male All Caucasian
B	5.0 FTE (proposing 6.0)	One full tenured professor One associate tenured professor Two assistant untenured professors One clinician Proposing an additional clinical position	Two female Three male All Caucasian
C	4.0 FTE (proposing 5.0)	One full tenured professor One associate tenured professor Two clinicians One vacant tenure-track position	Two female Two male All Caucasian
D	7.25 FTE	Two associate tenured professors Two assistant untenured professors 1.25 clinicians One vacant tenure-track position One vacant clinical position	Two female Four male All Caucasian
E	1.0 FTE	One full-time program director 19 adjunct faculty	13 female 7 male All Caucasian?

The alternative program presented a different perspective on the “critical mass” requirement. Its only full-time position was an interim program director who held a master’s degree in educational administration. An additional 19 individuals, named as “expert faculty” because of self-stated expertise, filled roles typically described as adjunct positions in universities. Six held doctoral degrees, and 9 were practicing or retired principals and/or superintendents. The majority worked in regional supervisory or consulting positions, and three worked in educational organizations within the state. This program application asserted that filling vacancies with candidates when they completed the program was a strength of their proposal, because program graduates would be knowledgeable of their curriculum and program expectations.

Student Recruitment and Admissions

The program submission instructions directed the programs to actively recruit high quality candidates and to use multiple selection criteria when reaching admissions decisions. Programs were to formulate plans to retain strong candidates and to recruit a diverse group of students. All programs adopted similar approaches to candidate recruitment, relying primarily on student self-nomination, with candidates learning of the program through websites and informational brochures. Many proposed asking local administrators and administrative groups to nominate promising teachers.

Although programs adopted similar admissions criteria, there was not universal agreement on specific admissions standards (Table 6). Two required a minimum of one year of teaching experience, one required three years' teaching experience, and two did not state a teaching requirement. The state required aspiring principals to possess a minimum of three years of full-time teaching experience in order to attain their principal license; because the cohorts operated in a minimum of a two-year cycle, individuals entering the programs with one year of experience therefore would satisfy the three-year teaching requirement needed for licensure at the point of graduation. Universities required applicants to provide undergraduate and graduate transcripts. Minimum grade point averages (GPAs) varied from 2.5 to 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (one did not indicate a minimum GPA). State statutes required the alternative program to accept candidates who already had earned a master's degree; this provider noted no minimum GPA requirements for admission. Two universities required the Graduate Records Examination (GRE); one also accepted the Miller Analogies Test. All required letters of recommendation, and three required written essays (one accepted a minimum 4.5 score on the analytical portion of the GRE). Two institutions also required a professional resume.

Table 6: Student Admissions Criteria

	Program				
Criterion	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
Teaching experience	None stated	One year	None	One year	Three years
Grade Point Average	2.5 undergraduate	No minimum	3.0 undergraduate	2.75 undergraduate	None (master's degree required)
Test requirements	GRE (400 verbal, 460 quantitative, 4.5 on analytical writing) or MAT (36)	None	GRE (900 minimum verbal and quantitative)	None	None
Recommendation letters	Three	Three	Three	Three	Two
Resume	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Letter of application	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Interview	No	No	Predictive Index screening process	No (unless needed)	Yes
Writing sample/essay	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Discussion and Implications

This review of principal preparation revision in Iowa has provided insights regarding the process of licensure reform. Following is a brief summary of general themes from our detailed analysis of the programs themselves. We focus in particular on student learning in revised programs, challenges of providing diverse, experienced faculty, and changes in overall program quality. Then, we address some implications that Iowa's review process has for other states contemplating reform. Among them are state mandates for change, tensions between ambiguous state expectations and the review process, and the importance of clarity in state expectations.

General Characteristics of Iowa Programs

Our content analysis has shown that approved programs increased emphasis on student learning, were somewhat successful in providing a diverse and qualified faculty, and made structural changes to provide more relevant, field-based quality programs.

Program focus on student learning. Licensure reform in Iowa has placed student learning at the center of programs with an emphasis on leadership skills over management tasks, reflective practice, collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, and the principal as an agent of reform. As stated in application guidelines, instructional leadership served as the conceptual framework for the principal's role. Quality field-based experiences give students the opportunity to practice what they have learned in traditional courses and alternative modules. ISSL standards and performance assessments were required to be woven throughout coursework and to be focused on learning experiences about leadership. Because of this requirement, it is not surprising that instructional practices to emphasize student learning became more consistent across universities than was the case in previously existing programs.

Diverse, experienced faculty. Although Iowa is a predominantly white state, trend data indicate that the urban centers and selected communities within the state are experiencing an influx of individuals from other nations and will continue to become increasingly diverse in the coming years. Yet, demographic characteristics of educational leadership faculty working in approved Iowa programs did not show substantial differences from national data reported over the last 10 years. Although 100% of the faculty members were Caucasian, national data also show a lack of diversity among educational leadership faculty, as reported earlier in this article (McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; NCES, n.d.). This nearly universal lack of diversity is particularly troubling considering demographics of more diverse states. The finding that nearly 40% of faculty were female was encouraging and consistent with McCarthy and Kuh's (1997) reported increases in women faculty, data later verified in 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NCES, n.d.).

Iowa fares well in providing faculty with administrative experience. Nearly 80% of faculty members in the four universities were former administrators, well above the 35% reported by Pounder, Crow, and Bergerson (2004) and McCarthy and Kuh's (1997) estimate of approximately 1/3 of faculty with prior administrative experience.

Overall program quality. Time, and longitudinal evaluation, will tell us if the new programs are of a higher quality in effectively preparing school principals than the previous programs. We can, however, state that the new programs are structured to respond to demands for more connections to the field through increased clinical experiences, use of cohorts, and, in the case of the alternative program, extensive use of adjuncts. Disappointingly, there was a less concerted effort to provide learning experiences for social justice.

Perhaps the most significant change was in the clinical practice component, which was a new state requirement. Universities now required a minimum of 400 clock hours of clinical experiences (360 hours for the alternative provider), with clinical activities infused throughout the courses. The role of the application instructions developed by the national panel was particularly relevant in the area of clinical practices, as the instructions served to clarify and extend the state code. The code did not provide minimum contact hours for these experiences, but the review panel's instructions contained a rigorous requirement: an internship or intensive equivalent field experience. A year-long full-time internship was presented as the ideal experience, and programs were encouraged to work toward that approach. Submissions that did not propose a formal internship were required to submit a convincing alternative plan that ensured the clinical experience was equivalent to a year-long internship. Consequently, the expectations of the review panel, rather than the state code, were the determining factor in substantially improving the quality of the internship experience.

Although the use of cohorts was not a stated requirement, all programs proposed a cohort or cohort-like experience. The literature base is clear in noting that the vast majority

of exemplary programs utilize the cohort structure (Barnett et al., 2000); consequently, Iowa's "state-of-the-art practice" criterion for program likely prompted all programs to utilize the cohort model.

There were striking contrasts in the use of adjuncts between the universities and alternative program. Universities complied with application guidelines to provide a "critical mass" of faculty. Yet, the alternative program was fully staffed with adjuncts and one-full time faculty member in an interim appointment. The review panel adopted a very liberal interpretation of the "critical mass" rule for this program**.** Nevertheless, Iowa fell well below national trends reported by NSOPF:04 (NCES, n.d.).

Faculty turnover represents a cause of concern for the higher education institutions. At the time of their submissions in May 2003, each of the four institutions reported that they had vacant positions, either for tenure-track or clinical faculty. In addition, a relatively short four years later, only 9 of the 18 university faculty members remain in their positions in their respective institutions. This turnover is not unexpected, given recent reports (McCarthy, 1999, NCES, n.d.) that have forecasted impending faculty retirements. Hiring new faculty may be perceived as a positive occurrence, but it has implications for newly approved principal preparation programs, particularly as it relates to curriculum continuity. The collective group of individuals who must implement the curriculum are not the same team who created the program. Because conflicts may occur when newly employed faculty do not share the same vision, values, and commitment to the restructured program, hiring decisions must assume a heightened degree of importance.

State policymakers had not adequately addressed social justice issues in program requirements, even though scholars call for the inclusion of this essential topic (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; McKenzie, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2006). Program approval submissions were not evaluated against this criterion, and this analysis showed that only three of the five approved programs embraced social justice in their theoretical frameworks.

A necessary next step would be for state officials to engage in conversations related to the leader's role in promoting democratic, equitable learning environments.

Observations about the Review Process

Iowa's licensure review process was driven by mandates for change, yet ironically the process suffered from ambiguous state expectations coupled with high-stakes consequences if programs did not satisfy the review panel's standards. Certainly, the consequences were quite real for four existing leadership preparation programs: one institution determined it could not meet the new expectations and voluntary closed its program, and three institutions that were unsuccessful in attaining approval were forced to terminate their programs.

In our discussion of Iowa's review process, we outlined the information that was shared with existing principal licensure programs. Iowa's Board of Education had expressed an interest in licensure reform and making programs available to areas of the state without easily accessible programs prior to the beginning of the review process. Adoption of the ISSL standards and involvement of SAI through the SAELP grant furthered the process. Once the review panel presented guidelines, the process seemed to be moving forward. Yet, program faculty were frustrated by unclear guidelines that were not always specified in Iowa code but were specified by the reviewers. Because we participated in writing our own institutions' proposals, we can attest to not only our personal frustrations with the process but also our colleagues' shared concerns. Ironically, the end result of this process was that, because programs were closed, rather than making programs more accessible to educators around the state, the options for educators to enroll in leadership preparation programs actually became more limited.

Close analysis of the review panel's guidelines disclosed that, if state statutes and administrative code were unclear or flexible, instructions provided specific guidelines that limited programs' options. Particularly exemplary were instructions that applicants describe

conditions and challenges of schooling and society in the state, present a theory of quality schooling that leads to improved student performance, and share a theory of school leadership. Applications that failed to address these topics risked the possibility of not being approved. One of the five proposed programs initially met this requirement. The other programs were required to more specifically respond to these global instructions that could be interpreted in many ways. It could be argued that the panel expected a specific answer that the four conditionally approved programs had not met, and which the four unapproved programs clearly had not met. Rather than being permitted the flexibility of designing a curriculum that operated within the broader frameworks of the state administrative code, faculty instead were required to meet the review panel's narrowly tailored expectations.

An interesting tension is present, which exists in the region between the existing state statutes and administrative code (which were somewhat ambiguous) and the review panel's criteria and guidelines (which were more clearly defined). Arguably, a proposal might meet the minimum program expectations outlined by the state code and yet might not rise to the level of expectations of the review panel; this proposal would be viewed as not meeting the panel's criteria and therefore would be unapproved. The clinical experience requirement presents an illustrative example: as noted earlier, the state did not establish a minimum number of contact hours for students' clinical experiences. However, the approved university programs each required a minimum of 400 hours, and the professional organization required 360 hours. It is not clear whether the panel has established a threshold of 360 hours for clinical experiences, or whether they would approve a program that proposes substantially less than this requirement. By holding out the ideal of a year-long full-time internship, the panel appears to suggest that an extensive clinical experience requirement is now mandatory for program approval.

In collecting documents for our analyses, we uncovered a scoring rubric the review panel used to make their recommendations. This rubric assigned differing weights to different criteria (i.e., the conceptual framework received more emphasis than other

criteria). Institutions had not been provided this rubric as they developed their programs, and faculty members writing their proposals were unaware that certain criteria would be scored more heavily than others. It seems reasonable to conclude that, had the programs had been informed that the conceptual framework would be weighted more heavily than other criteria, more attention would have been devoted to articulating a clear vision for the programs. Consequently, the four programs that went through several revisions eventually were similar to conform to the review panel's expectations and perceptions of program quality—which had not been overtly stated in guidelines.

One limitation of our study was our inability to review the proposals submitted by the four higher education institutions that were unsuccessful in obtaining state approval. Because these institutions withdrew their applications, we were not granted access to their materials. It would have been helpful to discern the deficiencies of unsuccessful applications, to note whether these proposed programs were lacking in their conceptual frameworks, in their proposed curricula, clinical experiences, and/or the quality of faculty. Although we identified instances in which existing programs improved their overall program features (i.e., conceptual frameworks, course experiences, clinical experiences, cohort delivery, assessments), we were unable to determine which of these features were considered to be essential by the members of the review panel. Because comparisons were not made between successful and unsuccessful submissions, we could not ascertain the minimum requirements that were necessary to attain program approval. This limitation has practical consequences for other institutions that may be contemplating submitting a leadership preparation program proposal to the state, as these institutions may wish to know: "How high (or how low) is the bar to obtain approval?"

Conclusion

It is axiomatic that each state holds the keys to leadership preparation reform, but program quality likely will not improve without higher and different standards for leadership

preparation programs (Murphy, 2006, 2007). Iowa's experience in adopting the ISSL standards for licensure reform provides lessons for other states as they call for new standards in licensure programs.

This analysis disclosed several outcomes of Iowa's decision to change the focus of leadership preparation programming: The focus on leadership for learning has become a central tenet of the approved programs, each has developed a conceptual framework, and the curriculum content has become more consistent across programs. In addition, Iowa's newly imposed requirement for clinical experiences has resulted in the infusion of field-based activities throughout the course experiences in each program. Furthermore, this study is illustrative in documenting the negative and immediate consequences that occur when institutions choose to ignore mandates to improve program quality: These programs will cease to exist. Iowa has used its authority to terminate programs that do not provide evidence of improved quality.

The findings from this study have policy implications for states calling for extensive revision of principal preparation programs or requiring programs to address standards rather than specific course mandates. In adopting the ISSL standards and by not fully specifying the required leadership preparation curriculum, Iowa created a certain amount of ambiguity for educational leadership faculties, as they began creating or revising their principal preparation programs. This ambiguity was resolved when responsibility for interpreting the standards and other provisions contained in the Iowa code was delegated to a national review panel, effectively outsourcing these important policy decisions to individuals who were not residents of the state. Although this decision to contract with a panel of experts may have been politically expedient, it could be argued that determining the content of a state's approved programs is not a discretionary activity that can be appropriately handed over to an outside group. When we compared the language contained within the state code and review panel's application instructions, it was clear that, in many instances, the state legislation was interpreted in ways that significantly exceeded the

written code. Rightly or wrongly, the review panel's actions, and their approval/disapproval recommendations for these program submissions, have set the standard for review of principal licensure in Iowa.

Certainly, few individuals would oppose the implementation of high quality, rigorous leadership preparation program standards. These approved programs came into alignment with the state's expectations and mandates, which resulted in a high level of conformity and uniformity among programs. Yet, an excessively rigid approval progress could stifle a spirit of innovation and experimentation among educational leadership program faculties, which ultimately may discourage aspiring school leaders from applying to uncreative and uninspiring programs. Therefore, it is important to strike a proper balance between increased rigor and program innovation.

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Donald G. Hackmann is an associate professor and interim head of the Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include leadership preparation programming, the principalship, and middle level education.

Carolyn L. Wanat is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Policy and Leadership Studies at the University of Iowa. Her research interests include leadership preparation programming, school-family-community relationships, and qualitative research methods.